

liges us to have. Keep those two maxims closely in view, because, when united they produce a wonderful balance in the Christian soul. We should live detached from every thing, because we must be every moment ready to die; but at the same time we must discharge and apply ourselves to all our duties, because we will have to render God an account of our life. If you separate one from the other, even a detachment from the world would be no longer a preparation for death, because it would be a detachment ill-understood and badly regulated.

V. In applying to yourself the words of St. Paul: *THE TIME IS SHORT*—draw another consequence from them, which is no less essential than this detachment from the world, namely, that you should, therefore, hasten to do all the good which God requires and expects from you; for the greatest misfortune that could befall you, would be to be snatched away by death, leaving the work of God imperfect. If possible, you should be able to say to God, in proportion, what Jesus Christ said to his Father: *I have finished the work that you have given me to do!* John xvii. In the state to which God has called you, you know to what this work extends, with regard both to yourself and others. What a consolation, if at your death you can bear the same testimony, and make the same declaration as Jesus Christ: *all is finished!* John xix. But, for

this purpose, you must hasten and profit of the time, whose every moment is so precious; never delaying until the morrow what you are able to do to-day—never covering your sloth with the veil of false prudence, executing punctually the inspirations of God, and doing good, as St. Paul says, whilst you have it in your power, and whilst God gives you time. This is the method of making a solid preparation for death.

VI. Consider well, that our Saviour in instructing his disciples on this important truth, did not say to them: *Prepare yourselves*; but, *Be ye ready*, (Matt. xxiv.) because what happened to the foolish virgins, happens every day to the children of the world. They prepared themselves, and even with haste, to go meet the bridegroom: nevertheless, the gate was closed against them: How many persons have I known in the world, who were surprised at a time when they were forming designs, and taking measures for their salvation: nay, even when they had made some progress in the work? All this was the beginning of preparation: but, because a preparation commenced is not sufficient, and that it requires to be complete, by a terrible judgment from heaven, which was, perhaps, the punishment of their past infidelities, God rejected them, because they were not entirely prepared.—Examine then the folds and intricacies of your heart, that you may